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AUTHOR Williams, Eugene
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ABSTRACT

The compilation of an audiovisual portfolio illustrating teaching skills and competencies is one method by which minority group teachers can gain an advantage in an increasingly restricted job market. There are four media components that should be considered: a student teaching notebook and a slide narrative program highlighting the job applicant's involvement in school and community activities and audio and video cassettes of lessons taught during the student teaching period. The material must be arranged in narrative sequence and should be presented at the most appropriate time during the interview. The inclusion of an audiovisual portfolio in a job application process demonstrates to the prospective employer the applicant's creative and organizational abilities, as well as effectively underscoring actual teaching competencies. (LH)

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Getting a Head Start in
the Teaching Profession

Eugene Williams

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
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Getting A Head Start in The Teaching Profession

With the employment situation as it is in teacher education, it is imperative that minority students, training to be teachers, develop and employ innovative ways that will give them a head start in securing the few available jobs. This is necessary because many of the minority prospective teachers, even those who have the interest, experience, and potential for becoming some of the best in the profession, are being discouraged from entering the teaching profession because of some of the requirements heaped upon them. One discourager is the National Teachers Examination. While the examination has some merits, it does not effectively provide prospective teachers the chance to demonstrate many of those competencies that indicate the ability to be effective in the classroom. The examination along with the other traditional information used by principals to select teachers will be required for a long time. However, minority teachers, those who are discouraged from pursuing teaching and those who find it easy to satisfy all of the current requirements, should consider ways of getting a head start.

Getting a head start as a minority teacher suggests that one must devise new ways of convincing principals that he does possess those skills, attitudes, and knowledge necessary for effective teaching in today's schools. How can this be done?

This can be done by developing material that demonstrate your competencies just as photographers and actors and actresses do. When these individuals go for job interviews, they do not go empty handed nor do they rely on an application, a resume, grade point average, examination scores, or letters of recommendation to indicate how knowledgeable or

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how skillful they are in their chosen profession. They provide the interviewer with work created or produced by them so as to convince the interviewer that they are the right person for the job. As prospective minority group teachers, you can and must pattern your job seeking behavior after these persons.

The next question that you must have is, what can I, as a prospective teacher, use to demonstrate my assets. The answer is very simple if you carefully consider and employ the following suggestions which are the result of six years of work with student teachers.

The suggestion is to develop a set of audiovisual materials to be employed prior to or during your interview with the persons who screen applicants for a particular teaching position or with the principal of the school. Call this material an audiovisual portfolio as the photographer calls his material a portfolio. In this audiovisual portfolio, include such things as your student teaching notebook, a slide narrative program, audio cassette tapes of lessons taught during student teaching, and a video tape of the same.

The content of the student teaching notebook could include any information that demonstrates those competencies that principals consider significant for a teacher to be effective. Some of this information includes the following: (1) lesson plans, (2) unit plans, (3) an autobiography, (4) a philosophy of teaching, (5) copies of tests and examinations, (6) grade and roll book, (7) copies of evaluations of your teaching from the cooperating teacher and the college supervisor, and (8) evaluations from your students and your self-evaluation. This list is not meant to be exhaustive. Remember that you are attempting to sell

yourself. Therefore, you should include as much information as is necessary for you to demonstrate your teaching skills.

The slide narrative program, another suggested part of the portfolio, should highlight those skills, activities, and projects of yours that can not be easily or effectively manifested or discussed in the typical job interview. A well constructed, instructional bulletin board, a field trip taken by your class, your attendance at a parent teacher student conference, your attendance at a community activity such as church, and your involvement with an extracurricular activity will provide good information for pictures for the slide program. Some of these things would suggest to the principal that you are interested in activities, involving students, in the school and in the community as well.

After you have made your slides, arrange them in a slide tray or slide protector sheets in such an order that they actually tell a story about your student teaching experience. Since a good slide narrative program includes a narration, write or record a narration to accompany your presentation. Remember to label and number your slides so that they correspond with the written narration. By completing this project, you have developed an invaluable set of material that you will share with the principal. Thus, you have the second item for the portfolio.

The third component, audio cassette tapes of lessons taught during student teaching, should demonstrate your best teaching skills and indicate your mastery of your subject area. In planning these lessons, you should give careful consideration to such matters as motivational strategies, questioning strategies, teaching strategies, instructional aids and resources, classroom management, and evaluation strategies.

Record as many lessons as you desire, but remember to include in your portfolio only those that are representative of the best of you. Be sure to include a lesson plan for each lesson, making sure that each lesson on an audio cassette tape has an introduction which includes your name, a description of the class, the topic of the lesson, the objectives of the lesson, and the evaluation strategies to be used to measure the achievement of the lesson's objectives. Labelling each tape would make it easy for the principal to identify those tapes he would be interested in listening to.

The fourth and final item of the portfolio is the video tape recording of a lesson or lessons taught during student teaching. This part, perhaps, requires the greatest amount of technical expertise and knowledge to produce. Therefore, you, the student teacher, should procure and utilize the technical skills of a person who can help you produce an impressive video tape. Assistance from the media specialists at your college or university or at your cooperating school should be sought.

Before recording the lesson(s), discuss the technical aspects of videotaping with an expert and get explicit directions from this person how best you can execute your role as teacher. In planning for the taping, consider some of the suggestions mentioned for the audio tapes. The manner in which you introduce your lesson, interact with your students, give directions, ask and answer questions, use instructional aids, maintain order in the classroom, and bring closure to your lesson is extremely important. Equally as important are your speaking voice and your appearance.

For each video taped lesson, there should be a lesson plan with the following components: the topic of the lesson, the date, the grade level, the instructional objectives, the contents(student and teacher objectives), the procedure(steps used to teach the lesson), instructional material and aids, and the evaluation. The video tape should be labelled with your name, the topic of the lesson, and the approximate number of minutes of the tape.

The four items, the notebook, the slide program, the audio cassette tapes, and the video tape, make up the audiovisual portfolio. All of the items, except the video tape can be placed in the notebook if the slides are placed in slide protector sheets and the audio cassette tapes in the the tape containers.

When you have completed the portfolio and have applied for a teaching position, you should make the interviewer or the principal cognizant of your portfolio. Write the principal, providing him with a brief description of the portfolio and inform him that you would like to share it with him before the interview or during the interview. If he consents to it being presented during the interview, make sure that he has available the equipment necessary to show it.

During the interview, you must must take an activist position in showing and explaining your material. you should also volunteer to operate the audiovisual equipment; it will give the principal the chance to observe your skill in operating the equipment, one skill that any good teacher should have. In presenting yourself through the portfolio, remember that eventhough you are selling yourself, there is no need to be a "high pressured salesman."

After you have presented and discussed your competencies, ask the principal or interviewer for his honest opinion of your assets and liabilities. Knowing about your strong points and weak points would provide you with the information you may need to be more impressive in other interviews. Ask him, also about your chances for employment in his school or any other schools in the system. Sometimes, principals, knowing that certain skills of a teacher could be best utilized in other schools, will be willing to refer an interviewee to another school needing his skills.

The development and use of the audiovisual portfolio by minority prospective teachers is one unique way of getting a head start in acquiring a teaching position. It does not guarantee the minority applicant a position, but it gives him a chance to demonstrate those competencies that are currently measured by paper and pencil, a not so effective way of displaying competencies. And with the significant position that media is taking in education, the audiovisual portfolio just might be the next answer to the teacher competency question.